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NEWS RELEASE

Nov. 14, 2005

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UM GRADUATE RECEIVES FULBRIGHT AWARD TO STUDY IN MOROCCO

MISSOULA—

Lara Birkes, a 2001 graduate of The University of Montana, has been awarded a Fulbright grant that will allow her to continue her studies in international business in Morocco during the 2005-06 academic year.

Fulbright Scholars are selected on the basis of their academic or professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential in their fields.

During 2001-04 Birkes served as a legislative correspondent for U.S. Sen. Max Baucus, working as a research assistant for the Senate Committee on Finance and a legislative aide for the Senate's Democratic leader. She has traveled to Egypt, Israel, Honduras, Costa Rica and Taiwan for study and work related to trade policy.

While in Morocco Birkes will investigate the practical implications and economic effects of the U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement that was signed in August 2004. The agreement is one of the first agreements of its kind between the United States and a developing country.

After her time in Morocco, Birkes plans to build on her undergraduate degree in international business and her experience working in the U.S. Senate by attending law school to study international trade. Her goal is to pursue a career that focuses on the impacts of trade development in the Middle East.

Birkes is the daughter of Keith Birkes of **Columbia, Mo.**

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